CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

Good pronunciation is crucial for effective communication in English. Pronunciation refers to how a word or language is spoken (Pennington, 2021). It is not just about producing sounds, it is about making meaningful communication possible and affecting how speakers are perceived and understood in English communication contexts (Gilakjani and Sabouri, 2016). Thus, improving pronunciation is essential for the effective communication.

In English communication, Prashant (2018) explained that pronunciation can ensure the message is conveyed accurately to the listener, avoid confusion and misunderstandings in communication, make emotions and attitudes expressed accurately, make speakers more confident in their communication abilities, and encourage them to participate more actively in conversations as well as create a positive impression by making the speaker appear more knowledgeable and competent, and help non-native speakers to be more easily understood by a wide range of English speakers.

For the second language (L2) learners, Prashant (2018) added that focusing on accurate pronunciation from the beginning can facilitate the learning process, making it easier to acquire new vocabulary, understand spoken language, and communicate effectively in English. Thomson (2015) stated that the learners' conscious attention to pronunciation can affect their fluency, which in turn might impact listener perceptions of accent,

intelligibility, and comprehensibility. This shows that improving fluency can lead to better comprehension and accent, which are essential for effective communication.

It can be said that English pronunciation and fluency are closely related because accurate pronunciation supports smooth and effective oral communication, which is a key aspect of fluency (Ratminingsih, 2016). Thus, improving pronunciation helps learners achieve better fluency in speaking by enabling them to be understood clearly and to communicate more confidently.

However, Putra (2009) stated that the first language (L1) can influence language use and teaching of the second language or standardized form the L2. Maiza (2020) added it includes interference from their first language, limited phonological knowledge, and varying levels of motivation among the learners. Besides, Pramerta et al. (2023) highlighted that both L2 students and teachers face challenges in English pronunciation and fluency skills primarily due to anxiety and difficulty in using English.

Based on the observation conducted by the writer of the fourth-grade elementary students at Widiatmika Elementary School, Jimbaran, similar problems are found in the students' pronunciation and fluency skills in saying words and sentences in English. It was including: students tended to pronounce English words the way they pronounce words in Bahasa Indonesia (L1); students mainly were not fluent in pronouncing English words and sentences; students had limited exposure to English (L2) during the English lesson in the classroom; the teacher tended to use the conventional strategy provided in the textbook, like "*listen and echo*" or "*listen and say*," singing a song, and tongue

twister game; and the teacher rarely use online platforms in classroom activities to practice pronunciation and fluency in saying words and sentences in English for the students.

Panduranga and Kalapala (2022) emphasize the need for EFL teachers to focus more on pronunciation instruction using various interactive methods and materials to enhance students' learning outcomes. Other than that, Swandana (2018) stated that repeatedly practicing words and sentences helps solidify correct pronunciation habits. Therefore, teachers should employ various strategies to teach pronunciation in their schools, such as drama, role-play, imitation and repetition, videos and group work, and word drills (Jafari et al., 2021). Other strategies, such as spelling and dictation, reading aloud, audiovisual aids, and tongue twister also can be used (Purwanto, 2019). These strategies are used for pronunciation instruction, which combines traditional and innovative methods to cover the diverse needs of students.

Tongue twister can be an effective strategy for students at the beginner level. According to Ratminingsih (2019), it is a great strategy for practicing the pronunciation or utterance of similar sounds. Moreover, Puspita et al. (2023) explained that tongue twister helps to improve phonemic awareness, which is essential for beginner students who are just starting to learn the sounds of a new language. It makes learning pronunciation fun and engaging and encourages students' participation. By focusing on repetitive and challenging phrases, students can improve their pronunciation and fluency in speech. The fun nature of tongue twister reduces the stress of learning a new language, making it easier for students to practice and retain new sounds. Nabung and Anung (2024) in

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their study also stated that the use of tongue twister has a positive impact on students' fluency. It engages students in linguistic exercises that challenge their articulation and fluency, proving to be valuable in language instruction.

Meanwhile previous studies (Heart et al., 2023; Nabila et al., 2023; Nabilla et al., 2023; Sari et al., 2023) have consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of the tongue twister strategy in improving students' pronunciation skill, these studies primarily targeted high school and university students. Their focus was limited to enhancing pronunciation accuracy without incorporating tools that could further support fluency development. Additionally, although these studies recommended the use of online tools in language learning, they did not explicitly implement or evaluate the integration of digital platforms in their research settings.

In contrast, the present study introduces a novel approach by applying the tongue twister strategy through an online platform named Sensay, targeted at younger learners, specifically grade-four elementary students at Widiatmika Elementary School in Jimbaran, Bali. This study not only examines pronunciation but also emphasizes fluency, providing a more comprehensive analysis of oral language skills. So that, by combining a traditional strategy with technological support in a new educational context, this research study expected to fill a significant gap in the literature and offer fresh insights into early language instruction using digital tools. Thus, based on the background above, the research study was written into a thesis with the title "**The Effect of Tongue Twister Strategy on English Pronunciation and Fluency of Widiatmika Elementary School Students**."

1.2. Problems Identification

Based on the background, several problems can be identified as follows:

1. Students have difficulty in pronouncing English words and sentences fluently

2. Students tend to pronounce English words the way they pronounce words in Bahasa Indonesia (L1)

3. In the pronunciation teaching strategy, the teacher rarely integrates the online platform

1.3. Limitation of the Problems

Based on the background and problems identified above, this study is limited to determine if there is a significant difference on students' English pronunciation and fluency taught by tongue twister strategy using Sensay.

1.4. Research Questions

The research questions in this research study are formulated as follows:

1. Is there any difference in English pronunciation and fluency between students who follow the tongue twister strategy using Sensay and students who follow the tongue twister strategy conventionally?

2. Is there any difference in English pronunciation between students who follow the tongue twister strategy using Sensay and students who follow the tongue twister strategy conventionally?

3. Is there any difference in fluency between students who follow the tongue twister strategy using Sensay and students who follow the tongue twister strategy conventionally?

1.5.Objectives of the Research

Based on the research problems above, the objectives of this research are formulated as follows:

1. To find out whether or not there is any difference in English pronunciation and fluency between students who follow the tongue twister strategy using Sensay and students who follow the tongue twister strategy conventionally.

2. To find out whether or not there is any difference in English pronunciation between students who follow the tongue twister strategy using Sensay and students who follow the tongue twister strategy conventionally.

3. To find out whether or not there is any difference in fluency between students who follow the tongue twister strategy using Sensay and students who follow the tongue twister strategy conventionally.

1.6.Significance of the Research

After conducting the study, the writer expected the result of the research can be functional as follows.

1.6.1. Theoretical Significance

The results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights and serve as a reference for educators and further researchers in selecting and applying effective strategies and digital tools for language instruction. Specifically, this research study contributes to development of knowledge by demonstrating how the integration of tongue twister strategy with an online platform, like Sensay can enhance not only pronunciation but also fluency among elementary school students.

This study highlighted the importance of combining engaging, student-centered techniques with accessible technology to create a more interactive and effective learning environment. Moreover, the findings may encourage educators to adopt innovative strategy in teaching English at the primary level, supporting the development of students' pronunciation and fluency abilities in English from an early age in a fun and meaningful way.

1.6.2. Practical Significances

1. For Teachers

   It is expected that teachers can get reference and improve their knowledge about the benefits of online tools or platforms for classroom activities, especially for practicing pronunciation and fluency skills.

2. For Students

   Students are expected to be more motivated to learn English as the foreign language, because due to the online platform the learning process is more engaging and playful; they get a better and more exciting learning experience, and it make the s easier for them to understand the material given.

3. For the Principal of Widiatmika Elementary School

   The results of this research study are expected to give contribution in improving English language learning, especially in pronunciation and fluency skills.